

# Sudden Death Due to Atherosclerotic Heart Disease in the Very Young Adult

Jennifer A. McNear, David A. Appel, Laudino M. Castillo-Rojas, Lena Avedissian, J. Edwin Atwood, Lisa A. Pearce, Robert N. Potter, Allen P. Burke, Ladd Tremaine, Philip J. Gentlesk, Eric A. Shry, S. Scott Reich, Robert E. Eckart

Department of Defense Cardiovascular Death Registry Group  
San Antonio, TX and Washington, DC

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# Introduction

- ◆ Sudden death in young adults is uncommon and frequently attributed to genetic conditions including hypertrophic cardiomyopathy or ion channel diseases.
- ◆ Sudden death due to coronary artery disease in those less than 30 years of age is not commonly reported as an etiology.

Eckart RE, et al. *Ann Intern Med* 2004;141:829-34  
Maron BJ. *N Engl J Med* 2003;349:1064-75

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# Study Design

- ◆ Review of non-traumatic sudden death within the Department of Defense with an available clinical record or autopsy for adjudication as to the cause of death.
- ◆ Sudden death - death or terminal life support within one hour of symptom onset.
- ◆ Cardiac death - pathologically confirmed heart disease with clinical circumstances defined as potentially cardiac in etiology or unexplained by pre-existing disease and without identifiable cause on post-mortem examination (idiopathic sudden death).
- ◆ Sponsored by the Air Force Medical Research Program (AF/SGRS).

# Defining the Cohort

- ◆ 1,044 non-traumatic suspected cardiac deaths identified from 1998 to 2008.
  - ◆ Excluded 51 (5.1%) subjects for lack of clinical record or autopsy which allowed for determination of cause, 130 (12.5%) subjects for unavailability of records, and 12 (1.2%) subjects for what was determined to be a clear non-cardiac etiology.
- ◆ 902 subjects with records available for review in which adjudicated cause of death was of cardiac etiology that form the basis for the cohort under investigation.

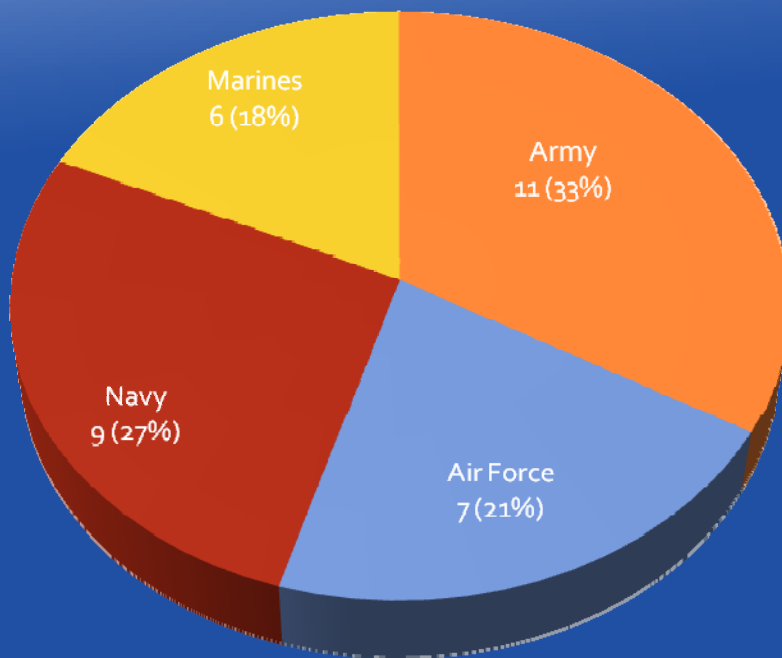
# Results

	Age <30 years n=218	Age >30 years n=684	p-value
Age, years	24±3	43±7	<0.001
Gender, % male	205 (94.0%)	666 (97.4%)	0.030
Idiopathic SCD	101 (46.3%)	86 (12.6%)	<0.001
Cardiomyopathy	65 (29.8%)	109 (15.9%)	<0.001
Coronary Disease	51 (23.4%)	484 (70.8%)	<0.001
Atherosclerotic disease	33 (64.7%)	478 (98.8%)	
Anomalous coronary artery	12 (23.5%)	1 (0.2%)	

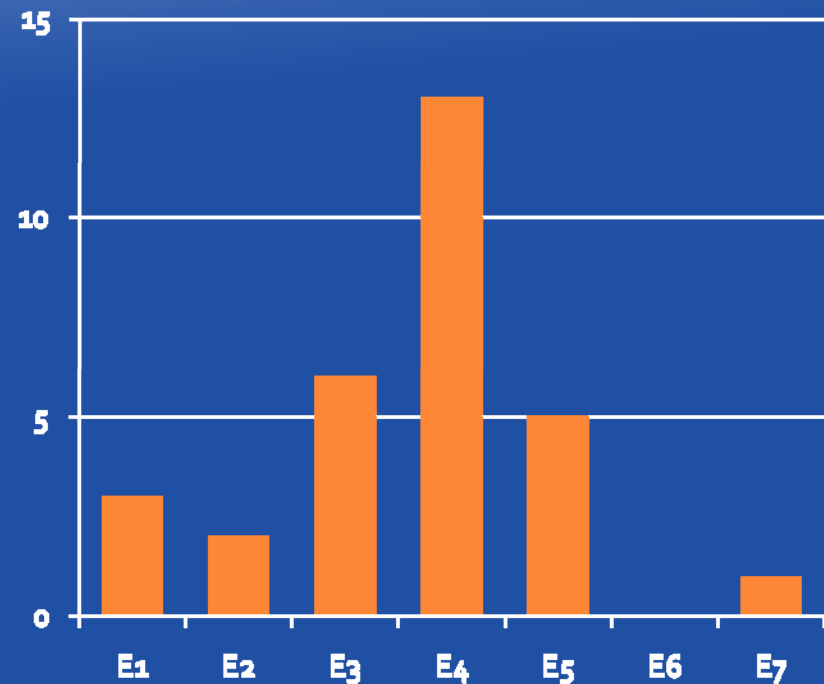
# Baseline Characteristics

Military specific findings for those with death due to ASCAD <30 years of age

**Branch**



**Pay Grade**



Not shown is the 1 junior Officer

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# Similar clinical manifestations

	Age <30 years n=33	Age >30 years n=478	p-value
Body mass index, kg/m <sup>2</sup>	28±3	29±4	0.119
Exertional death	16 (48.5%)	190 (39.8%)	0.323
Prodrome	13 (39.4%)	153 (32.0%)	0.381
Location of Death			
Out-of-hospital	7 (21.2%)	107 (22.4%)	0.672
Emergency Department	15 (45.5%)	249 (52.1%)	
In-hospital	6 (18.2%)	54 (11.3%)	
Antemortem symptoms	3 (9.1%)	58 (12.1%)	0.602



# Differential expression of atherosclerotic disease

	Age <30 years n=33	Age >30 years n=478	p-value
Myocardial manifestation			
LV thickness, cm	1.6±0.3	1.6±0.4	0.647
Fibrosis	7 (21.2%)	149 (31.2%)	0.314
Necrosis	2(6.1%)	48 (10.0%)	0.658
Coronary artery manifestation			
Multivessel obstructive disease*	13(56.5%)	256 (77.1%)	0.041
Plaque rupture	7 (21.2%)	99 (20.7%)	0.999
Coronary thrombosis	9 (27.3%)	114 (23.9%)	0.814
Aortic atherosclerosis*	6 (30.0%)	160 (63.0%)	0.008

\*limited analysis to those cases where specified

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# Context of Findings

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# Conclusion

- ◆ Sudden death due to atherosclerotic coronary artery disease in those <30 years is much higher than previous series.
- ◆ Our differences may be due to this be an active surveillance, all with complete autopsies.
- ◆ Death due to atherosclerotic coronary artery disease in the young occurs frequently without a prodrome and is often non-exertional.

# Sudden Death Due to Atherosclerotic Heart Disease in the Very Young Adult

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# Similar clinical manifestations

	Atherosclerotic CAD n=33	Idiopathic SCD n=101	p-value
Age, years	24±3	24±3	0.253
Body mass index, kg/m <sup>2</sup>	28±3	27±5	0.521
Exertional death	16 (48.5%)	46(45.5%)	0.926
Prodrome	13 (39.4%)	34 (33.7%)	0.697
Location of Death			
Out-of-hospital	7 (21.2%)	23 (22.4%)	0.138
Emergency Department	15 (45.5%)	60(52.1%)	
In-hospital	6 (18.2%)	5 (11.3%)	
Antemortem symptoms	3 (9.1%)	11 (10.9%)	0.999

# Differential expression of disease

